

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
September 13, 2016
Juneau, AK

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. Present were James Fields, Wilfried Zibell, Dr. Keith Hamilton, Sue Hull, Barbara Thompson, and Rebecca Himschoot. The absent members were excused. The board stood for an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Members reported no conflicts of interest. Members adopted the agenda with no changes.

Public Comment

Tim Parker, president of NEA-Alaska, said the Every Student Succeeds Act is an improvement over the No Child Left Behind Act. He said testing can't be the driver of public education; an important driver is teachers as trusted professionals. NEA is concerned about a shortage of teachers.

Dr. Lisa Parady, executive director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators, thanked Commissioner Johnson for reaching out to stakeholders. She expressed concern about any regulations that made it harder to staff schools, and said the board should hold the proposed regulations that relate to teachers.

Christie Reinhardt, of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, said it would be a bad idea to use the SAT or ACT to evaluate students for school accountability. It is difficult for parents of children with disabilities to meet the SAT and ACT timeline for requesting accommodations. Those assessments allow no modifications, as well.

Karen Gaborik, Superintendent of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, asked for clarity about proposed regulations that relate to endorsements. She also said it would be a challenge to get a certificated teacher within 19 days of the start of the school year.

Ed Gray of Sitka said he wants to participate as a parent in the state's selection of a new assessment. Parent rights should be a priority, he said.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1. ESSA Update. Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education & Certification, and Dr. Susan McCauley, Education Policy Coordinator, briefed the board. The process of working with stakeholders on the state plan to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act is entering another phase; the department is developing specifics to present to stakeholders in the fall. Commissioner Johnson said the ESSA state plan is not the department's vision for public education; rather, the question is how ESSA can support the department's vision. The department expects to present regulations in June to implement the state plan.

Agenda Item 2. RFI Update. Margaret MacKinnon, Director of Assessment & Accountability, briefed the board on the department's Request for Information from prospective assessment vendors. Submissions are due September 14. If the department uses a pre-existing assessment this year, it could customize the test in future years. Commissioner Johnson said the department is seeking only a summative assessment and not interim assessments. The Commissioner said there should be clarity on why the department gives a summative assessment: to inform the public about the education system, provide data for improvement efforts, and monitor equity of opportunity across the state. The purposes of summative assessments are different from the purposes of classroom assessments.

Agenda Item 3. MEHS Technology Department. Superintendent Janelle Vanasse, teachers Josh Arnold and Kevin Gwinn, and librarian Erika Drain reviewed the technology programs and resources at Mt. Edgecumbe High School, which included engineering, robotics, and library media.

Agenda Item 4A. Minimum Expenditure for Instruction. Elizabeth Nudelman, Director of School Finance & Facilities, explained that the proposed regulation aligns with a recent statute that eliminated the minimum expenditure for instruction.

Agenda Item 4B. Museum Fees. Patience Frederiksen, Director of Libraries, Archives & Museums, said the proposed regulation allows the state museums to collect fees for rental of their facilities. Deputy Director Bob Banghart said the proposed regulation does not set particular fees because requests to use museum space are complex. The regulation is intended to allow the museums to recover their costs.

Agenda Item 5A. HQT, Substitutes, Retired Teacher Certification. Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education & Certification, briefed the board on changes to the initial proposed regulation, made in response to public comments. Specifically: 1) holders of retired teacher certificates would not be limited to their endorsement areas if they work as long-term substitute teachers; 2) districts may use long-term substitutes for up to 120 days; and 3) teachers who do not hold a valid Alaska certificate may be used to fill vacancies at the beginning of the school year.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 6A. Minimum Expenditure for Instruction. First Vice Chair Sue Hull moved and Rebecca Himschoot seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 09.115 Minimum expenditure for instruction and 4 AAC 09.120 Budget review. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 6B. Museum Fees. Barbara Thompson moved and Rebecca Himschoot seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 57.910(a)(5) General Provisions: Fees for Services. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 7A. HQT, Substitutes, Retired Teacher Certification. Rebecca Himschoot moved and Barbara Thompson seconded the following motion: After considering all public comment, I move the State Board of Education and Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 04.210 Highly qualified teachers; 4 AAC 04.212 Objective uniform standards; 4 AAC 12.380 Retired certificate (Type R); and 4 AAC 18.021 Employment of substitute teachers. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 8. Standing Reports. In response to board members' questions, department staff said federal funding was used to attend a Head Start conference; the decision to move Rampart School from one district to another was jointly made by the departments of education and commerce, and agreed to at the local level; the department will provide updates on construction of a swimming pool at Mt. Edgecumbe High School; the Mt. Edgecumbe strategic plan is a living document; and state grants are available for communities to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the purchase of Alaska. It also was noted that Bob Banghart will retire September 30.

Agenda Item 9. Commissioner's Report. Commissioner Johnson thanked Governor Walker, Lt. Governor Mallott, NEA-Alaska President Tim Parker, Executive Director Dr. Lisa Parady of the Alaska Council of School Administrators, superintendents, and department staff. The Commissioner said the department will engage stakeholders, and he wants a council of teachers. He noted the department's entry into social media.

Agenda Item 10A. Minutes of the June 16-17, 2016, Meeting. Barbara Thompson moved and First Vice Chair Sue Hull seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the September 16-17, 2016, meeting. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 11. Executive Session. First Vice Chair Hull moved and Rebecca Himschoot seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development convene in executive session to discuss the department's strategy regarding settlement and to obtain legal advice regarding contract claims with the Achievement & Assessment Institute (AAI) at the University of Kansas. Under the Open Meetings Act, AS 44.62.310(c)(1), this is a matter the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the Department of Education and Early Development. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

After coming out of executive session the board adjourned at 12:40 p.m.